

REMARKS**Status of the Claims**

The Application as filed includes 39 claims with three of those claims, numbers 1, 15 and 28, being independent claims. All claims (1-39) are subject to a restriction requirement pursuant to 35 USC § 121. As no claim amendments are made herein, claims 1 to 39 will remain pending after entry of this Response.

The Outstanding Office Action

The Examiner identifies seven patentably distinct species of the claimed invention based on a grouping of the Figures. In relevant part, asserts that species (V) consists of Figures 8A-8D, species (VI) consists of Figures 9 and 10 (left side), and species (VII) consists of Figures 9 and 10 (right side).

Figures 8A to 8D provide a more or less complete embodiment of the invention as claimed. Figures 9 and 10 each show a partial cross-section of embodiments of the invention to show the effects of changing the shapes of the flanges. On the right side of each Figure, the closure flange 240 is shaped in the form of a partial cone and has a radial slant of approximately 45 degrees. Comparing these right side figures to the embodiment of Figures 8A to 8D (and particularly the cross-sectional view of Figure 8B), it becomes apparent that closure flange 240 configuration of Figures 8 is the same as that illustrated on the right side of Figures 9 and 10. Accordingly, applicants submit that species (V) and (VII) identified by the Examiner are in fact the same embodiment.

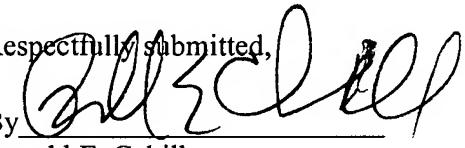
Applicants hereby provisionally elect species (VII), with traverse only as to the Examiner's indication that species (V) and (VII) are distinct. All claims (1 to 39) read on the species provisionally elected. Accordingly, no claims should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants believes the pending application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that further communication would expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicants encourage the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorney.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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